

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

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TAGS: TSPA, FR, JA, US

SUBJECT: REPORTED JAPANESE-FRENCH COOPERATION IN BOOSTER ROCKET
DEVELOPMENT

REF: TOKYO 14534

SUMMARY: THE JAPANESE ECONOMIC PRESS (JAPAN ECONOMIC JOURNAL)
HAS CARRIED RECENT ARTICLES REPORTING ALLEGED FRENCH OFFER OF
COOPERATION WITH JAPAN IN LIQUID HYDROGEN FUELED ROCKET
DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WILL LEAD TO CAPABILITY FOR LAUNCHING 500 KG
PAYLOAD INTO SYNCHRONOUS ORBIT. ARTICLES INDICATE JAPAN STRONGLY
INTERESTED IN PROPOSAL, WITH INTEREST ATTRIBUTED TO US UN-
WILLINGNESS TO TRANSFER LIQUID HYDROGEN TECHNOLOGY. TOKYO
EDITION NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE OF JANUARY 28 CARRIES SHORT NOTE
CLAIMING COOPERATION ALREADY DECIDED UPON. NASDA OFFICIALS DENY
THAT ANY "WRITTEN" OFFER HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM FRANCE, BUT
ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SUBJECT HAS COME UP IN FRENCH-JAPANESE CON-
VERSATIONS BEGINNING LAST NOVEMBER, AND THAT JAPAN HAS STRONG
INTEREST IN LIQUID HYDROGEN TECHNOLOGY IN WHICH CONNECTION
OUTSIDE COOPERATION COULD BE HELPFUL. END SUMMARY.

1. SCICOUNS DISCUSSED WITH KURODA, NASDA DIRECTOR OF SYSTEMS
PLANNING, AND NOGUCHI, DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL COORDINATION,
REPORTED JAPANESE-FRENCH COOPERATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF LIQUID
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HYDROGEN ROCKET FUEL CAPABILITY. BURDEN OF STORIES IN JAPANESE

PRESS IS THAT JAPAN EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN FRENCH OFFER, WHILE NEWSWEEK ARTICLE CONTENDS DECISION ALREADY MADE. BOTH SOURCES ATTRIBUTE DECISION TO US REFUSAL TO SHARE THIS TECHNOLOGY,

WHICH WOULD EXTEND JAPANESE SYNCHRONOUS ORBIT LAUNCH CAPABILITY TO 500 KG OR, ACCORDING NEWSWEEK REPORT, ONE TON.

2. KURODA CONTENDED THAT JAPANESE PRESS ARTICLES CAME AS COMPLETE SURPRISE TO NASDA. HE EXPLAINED THAT NASDA PRESIDENT SHIMA AND OTHER HAD VISITED FRANCE IN NOVEMBER, AT FRENCH INVITATION, AND QUESTION OF LIQUID HYDROGEN COOPERATION HAD COME UP, BUT THAT NO FRENCH PROPOSAL HAS BEEN RECEIVED. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH NOGUCHI, KURODA AMENDED HIS REMARKS BY STATING THAT NO "WRITTEN PROPOSAL" HAS EVER BEEN RECEIVED. WHILE THUS ACKNOWLEDGING THAT POSSIBLE COOPERATION IS UNDER CONSIDERATION, HE MAINTAINED NOTHING HAS BEEN AGREED UPON.

3. SCICOUNS REFERRED TO EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH KURODA, REPORTED IN REFTEL, IN WHICH HE STRESSED LONG RANGE NATURE OF LIQUID HYDROGEN PROGRAM IN JAPANESE SPACE PLANS. KURODA CONFIRMED THAT THIS IS STILL CASE, WHILE ADDING SIGNIFICANT NEW INFORMATION THAT SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY IS INCLUDED IN NEW JFY 74 BUDGET TO PERMIT INITIATION OF HYDROGEN PROGRAM. KURODA ESTIMATED JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT OF LIQUID HYDROGEN TECHNOLOGY FOR UPPER STAGES WOULD REQUIRE 8-10 YEARS WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP. OUTSIDE HELP COULD SHORTEN THIS CONSIDERABLY.

4. ALLUDING TO PRESS COMMENTS THAT POSSIBLE JAPANESE-FRENCH COOPERATION IS RESULT OF US REFUSAL TO FURNISH THIS TECHNOLOGY, SCICOUNS OBSERVED THAT HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY JAPANESE REQUEST FOR IT. KURODA AGREED THAT THIS WAS SO, BUT EXPLAINED THAT JAPANESE WERE EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO MAKE REQUEST OUTSIDE OF 1969 AGREEMENT WITHOUT KNOWING IN ADVANCE WHAT THE ANSWER WOULD BE. HE CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, BY SAYING THAT THEY "DEEPLY DESIRED" TO KNOW OF US ATTITUDE TOWARD COOPERATION IN LIQUID HYDROGEN FIELD.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT JOINT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN BY JAPAN AND FRANCE TO COOPERATION IN LIQUID HYDROGEN ROCKET FUEL TECHNOLOGY, BUT EMBASSY'S BEST ESTIMATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS THAT NO COMMITMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE ON EITHER SIDE. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THAT THERE MAY BE OBJECTIONS TO US COOPERATION WITH JAPAN IN THIS AREA AND WOULD APPRECIATE BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE ON US ATTITUDES.
SHOESMITH

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